

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

A substitute specification and abstract is provided herewith to facilitate prosecution of the application. Additionally, a marked reproduction of the original specification and abstract, showing changes effected in the substitute specification and abstract, is submitted herewith.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please substitute for corresponding pending claims the claims as shown rewritten below with amendments effected therein. Appendix I is attached hereto having marked versions of said claims with amendments indicated by brackets and underlining.

*Rule 126*  
*29*  
*24.*

(Amended) A wood component, comprising:

*B2*  
*30*  
an article of wood including altered properties in geometrically defined near-surface areas as compared with an original state of the wood, said geometrically defined near-surface areas having properties of solidified wood melts substantially free from pyrolytic degradation products.

*25.* (Amended) A wood component according to Claim *24*, wherein the geometrically defined near-surface areas include cell walls melted in one or several cutting directions so that a diffusion resistance in said geometrically defined areas

to ambient media is greater relative to that of the original state of the wood independent of the cutting direction.

*full /26*  
31  
26. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim ~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein said geometrically defined near-surface areas are visually different from non-melted wood in the original state with respect to optical properties, absorptivity, reflectivity and diffusing power, and thereby, luster.

*B2 B3 J*  
32  
27. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim ~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein the geometrically defined near-surface areas have a higher hardness and abrasion resistance than non-melted wood in the original state.

*33*  
28. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim ~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein a deformation behavior in the geometrically defined near-surface areas is altered compared with non-melted wood in the original state.

*34*  
29. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim ~~24~~ or ~~25~~, wherein a bulk of the solidified wood melt is in a geometrically defined area of the wood component below a surface thereof.

*July 26*  
*29 30*  
30. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim 24 or 25, wherein at least one of physical chemical properties of the geometrically defined near-surface areas is altered from the original state by substances incorporated into the solidified wood melt.

*July 26*  
*29 30*  
31. (Amended) A wood component according to Claim 30, wherein the incorporated substances are at least one of particles and pigments.